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Book Review

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Academic Book Centers

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Profiles Encouraged:

John F. Archer



Born: March 27, 1946, St. Louis, Mo. Moved to Los Angeles in November, 1946. Lived at the Los Angeles Orphanage for a couple of years. (My aunt was the sister superior and rented a cottage on the grounds to my parents. One can see the cottage and grounds of the orphanage in *Angels in the Outfield* (1951).)

Education: Traveled around the world. Graduated from the University of California, Santa Barbara in 1969 with a double major in anthropology and studio art with an emphasis in printmaking. This was during the height of civil unrest when the Bank of America building was burned down.

ISBN Prefix: 0-915718, Atavistic Press.

Job: Currently the Assistant Department Head, Order and Monographic Receiving, Acquisitions Department of the University Library at UCSD. Have been employed in the UC library system continuously since May, 1968. Have seen many changes in technology.

Children: A son, Sean (24) and a daughter, Heather (22).

Hobbies: Barcoding all the nouns in my apartment. Hate zealots, so I draw the line at adjectives and adverbs.

Favorite book: Great Britain. Patent Office. *Printing patents: abridgments of patent specifications relating to printing 1617-1857.*

Advice: Stay away from poets. They always want silly line drawings for illustrations, never pay, and have tin eyes.

Book Review

Column Editor: **Barry Fast** (Academic Book Centers)

If you have a title to review or one to submit for review, please send it to — Book Review Editor, Against the Grain, 11 Orlando Avenue, Ardsley, NY 10502. Thanks. — BF.

Literary Reflections: Michener on Michener, Hemingway, Capote and Others, by James A. Michener. State House Press, P.O. Box 15247, Austin TX 78761. 213 pp. \$22.00. ISBN: 1-880510-0605.

Review by **Nat Bodian** (Publishers' Marketing Consultant)

Every once in a while, one comes across a small book so captivatingly filled with wisdom and insights, and so breezily written, that once started it is almost impossible to put down. When such a book is by one of America's most highly-regarded authors and one who has enthralled millions of readers over many decades, the book is even more enjoyable, because in the reading one gains an intimate understanding of what impelled the author to his literary achievements and also a feeling of knowing the author as one would know a close, lifelong friend.

Such is the book **Literary Reflections** by James A. Michener. Michener originally wrote most of this work as a limited edition of 250 copies in 1983. It has since been updated and made available to a larger audience in this republication by State House Press of Austin, Texas.

In experiencing this book — and its content is more of an experience than a reading — one learns about Michener, author of more than twoscore books, his early life and emergence as a writer, and his outlook on life as a major literary figure. It is filled with intimate, anecdotal glimpses of and contacts with other famous literary contemporaries of this century.

One learns early on that author Michener, while carrying on a lifelong love affair with literature, was not a good student, admitting: "I had been thrown out of every school I ever attended: primary, junior high, high school, and now college." (to which he was later readmitted). Still later in his education, Michener recalls taking the Graduate Record Examination at Harvard University, "a test for all young men and women in the better universities who sought advanced degrees . . . covering six or eight major fields of learning. In 'Literature' I received a mark so high that it stood not only at the head of many thousands but also off the top of the page by about four inches."

Michener brings the reader through the various stages of his life in such an informal and off-the-cuff manner, that one would imagine himself or herself sitting and exchanging reminiscences with an old childhood friend.

In his adult life, after a stint as an editor at the Macmillan Book Company, Michener talks about his emergence as a successful book author and his reflections on the famous literary personalities that influenced his life as an author. He provides many intimate insights on well-known literary works by these personalities. In an informal, relaxed way, you'll read about **Margaret Mitchell** of *Gone With the*

Wind fame and her meeting with Michener in a visit to the Macmillan offices; of his meeting with **Ernest Hemingway**, arranged through their mutual friend, *New York Post* columnist **Leonard Lyons**, his frequent contacts with **Truman Capote** in the editorial offices of Random House, where both Michener and Capote were published by **Bennett Cerf**.

Interspersed with Michener's anecdotes, reflections, and worldly musings, are bits of poetry reflecting Michener's outlook on life at various stages (In 1993 when the book was published, Michener was 86 years old). Whether you are a Michener fan, a librarian, or a member of the publishing community, the 213 pages of **Literary Reflections** are a fulfilling and enriching read that will stimulate and inspire. ☞

